

A

LETTER

TO THE

Free and Independent

BRETHREN

OF

TRINITY GUILD.



D U B L I N:

Printed in the Year M,DCC,L,

A

LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Reason I chuse to address only that Part of the Corporation, who have, for some Time past, so warmly exerted themselves in Defence of your remaining Rights; and in Vindication of those which have been arbitrarily and illegally taken from you; is, because I do not expect that Representation and Advice will be regarded or attended to by your Opposites; they have been taught, poor Men! to look upon all Argument as the worst Kind of Influence; Appeals to Duty and Conscience, in a Corporation-dispute and in Elections, as the worst Kind of Theft, the Stealing the People from themselves; and the Acting from Reason and Conviction as the very worst Degree of Corruption.

BUT you, my worthy Friends, who have not as yet bowed the Knee to *Baal*; who are Slaves to nothing but to Reason; dependent on nothing besides the Laws and Constitution of your Country; from you may be expected Obedience to what *that* Reason dictates; you at least amongst your Fellows will submit to, whilst you endeavour to preserve *that* Constitution.

It is not enough that you are, each of you, free and virtuous in himself; it is necessary, it is your Duty, in such a Juncture as the present, to unite together, to form a Party able to oppose a contrary Faction; it is
your

your Business to concert Measures for the Public, whilst others are concerting together how to obtain and divide your Spoils; without this the Virtue and Resolution of the Individuals will be of no Advantage to the Public; without this, without a Bond of Union, a Spirit of Party, you will be easily broken; for in Council, as well as in the Field, a weak, well-disciplined Body will easily overthrow and set at nought a strong, ungoverned, scattered Multitude.

How much does your own Experience prove this! You—the Virtuous—the Good—the Free compose the Majority of your Corporation; you were so when you so justly exerted your Rights to the Election of your Magistrates, in Opposition to the Dictates of your Council; you proved yourselves to be equal, if not superior, to your Enemies in *Wealth* and *Spirit*, when your Contention in the King's-bench called on you to shew it. But now, I shame to say it, this your noble Party has been defeated by an almost vanquished and despairing Faction. Despair of Success, Indignation at the Prosperity of those you despised, Want of Confidence in the Virtue of your Fellows, have made you desert the Cause—made you meanly abandon the Forward among you to the Insult, the Scorn and Oppression of your Enemies.

I AM speaking of your last *Quarter-day*; the Recollection of what you then suffered to be transacted would justify any Warmth of Expression. Behold, a Scene the most surprizing, the most shocking!—Men who had bravely contended for, and almost obtained, an Emancipation from the arbitrary Power of Aldermen, of their Council, of their Masters, obliged to submit to the Promulgation of new Laws to grant and confirm, to their Masters Aldermen and Council, those long-contested Privileges and Powers: With what little Opposition they suffer their Masters to break through the most antient, confirmed and settled Law of the Corporation, the Law of balloting? With what

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what Tameness they submit to the Admission of Strangers, of Aliens, of the professed and avowed Advocates for the Power of their Adversaries?—Does not the Recollection of all this awaken Remorse in the Breast of every of you who were absent; and Grief, alleviated by the Testimony of a good Conscience, in the Breast of such of you who were Witnesses to, and who, to your might, opposed such extraordinary, such illegal, such arbitrary Proceedings?

BUT all is not lost; be united and you will conquer. Shew your Numbers, your Spirit, and Unanimity on Monday next, and all will be well. By these you will overpower, you will awe, you will overcome; but if you should yet fail, if you should after all prove the Minority, yet consider that to be of the *Minority* is sometimes to be distinguished, advantageously distinguished from the *Needy*, the *Expectants*, the *Dependants*, the *slavish Prostitutes*, the *Fools of Fortune*, who, it is presumed, may at some Time or other compose the Majority of any Assembly.

To continue of a *Minority* is to persevere in the Course of Virtue, maugre all the Discouragement which may attend it. It is to be *one* in the Defence of a Fortress in an over-run Country.—It is opening an Asylum to the Refugees from Tyranny.—It is keeping up a Standard, a Mark, a Light by which Wanderers may be directed to their Home and to their Safety.—It is being free and virtuous in a degenerate Age.

WHAT Effects have we not seen from the Perseverance and Virtue of a Minority? Did not a Minority disconcert, baffle the Scheme of an universal Excise? Did not its Perseverance cause at last the Removal of a potent, a dangerous Minister? Or, to look nearer Home, Did not a Minority in our House of Commons of *Ireland*, in the Year 1711, composed at the Beginning of not two Score Members, grow at last so powerful as to oblige the Crown to dissolve a Parliament, where the Virtue of a small Number had

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Over-awed, or brought over that Part of their Opponents who werenot lost to Shame and Remorse? And, among yourselves, how small were the Numbers on the Side of Liberty, when the Cause of the Commons against the Aldermen was argued in your Hall? When it was debated amongst you, whether the Council or the House should have a Controul over the Petitions presented to the Assembly? And yet to what did this Minority rise? Even to a Superiority in the Corporation, which you would have undoubtedly kept, had you been as watchful of your Liberties, as others were of their ill-acquired Power: But even in your present distressed Situation, your Minority has not been without some Influence, or what could have prevented those arbitrary Rulers of the City, the Aldermen and their Creatures, from attempting in your Hall, what they perpetrated in the Common-Council of the City?

UPON a Supposition, therefore, that these Representations will have some Effect on you—that you will have some Meeting before next *Monday*, I take Leave to offer you my best Advice how to conduct yourselves, and what I imagine will most conduce to the restoring Order and Freedom in your Corporation.

THO' it may be thought too late to recal the Law, made last Quarter-Day, which enables the Masters and Wardens, to nominate and appoint the Council of the House; yet it is abundantly in your Power to limit the Authority and Power of a Council thus set over you. The Power they assume to themselves of making a Return of Common-Councilmen or Representatives from your Body, is evidently usurped; nor can any *Bye-Law* be produced, which gives them that Power. Nay, I doubt very much (tho' it is a Question too learned for me to discuss) Whether if such a Law were extant, it would be legal? Or whether you can, even for yourselves, much less for your Successors, give up to a Part of you, a Right vested by Charter,

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or the New-Rules, in the whole Body.—Now the New Rules (which are supposed to have the same Force as an Act of Parliament) do absolutely say, that the Return of Common-Council shall be made by the *several Guilds*; not by the *Councils* or *Committees* of those Guilds: and that the Enactors of these Rules knew the Difference between *Assemblies* and *Councils*, must be evident by their limiting the Elections of Officers in *some* Corporations to the *Common Council*, in *some* to the *Aldermen*, in *many* leaving it to the *Assembly* of the People; and on this Foundation it was adjudged (even by Aldermen themselves, in the Case of the Corporation of Goldsmiths) that the Council was not, nor could be empowered to return and elect, but that such ought to be done by the *whole* Corporation.

BUT there is something much stronger for you in this Case; the Goldsmiths had, or were supposed to have committed to *one* Part, to a *Part* chosen by themselves, the Power in a certain Case of the *whole* Body;—but your Council, I hope I may say it without Offence, is *not* a *Part* of yourselves; it is not *you* who have appointed them, this has been done by *Men* who have Views and Interest distinct from yours; they are composed of *Aldermen* who have no relation with you, but such relation as a General has to his Soldier—a Master to his Disciple—a Ruler to the People; *they* were instituted (or at least such are their Pretensions) as *Governors* over you; your Representatives in Common-Council were instituted certainly as a *Controul* over *these* Governors: Now what Absurdity is it, that they as your Council should elect your Controulers over them as Aldermen? How can Men act consistently with their Duty as your Fellows; with their Trust as your Committee; and with their Interest as your Governors?

I have so good an Opinion of these Gentlemen, as to imagine that it is merely from a Regard to you;
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from an Affectation of Popularity, that they condescended to accept of *Places* in your Corporation, so *inconsistent* and so opposite to their *Dignity* of Aldermen. I am told, that sometimes they have had the Modesty to decline voting in the Returns of the Corporations. But who sees not, from this very Case, how *inconsistent* their different *Duties* are, and that they must sacrifice the Duties of *one* Office, when they desire to fulfil *those* of another? Who sees not, that, when they act in their *Aldermanic* Capacity, they cease to be *Part* of you; that when they act as your *Brethren*, they no more act as *Aldermen*?

I MAKE no doubt, but if some of you brought a Petition to the Board at the next Election, complaining of an undue Return, the Aldermen would give you a fair Hearing.—I doubt not but, as Governors and Judges, they would determine against themselves as Members of your Council. They have done Justice, in a like Application, to the Brethren of the Goldsmiths against their Council—they have done Justice (after some little Delay which was necessary to carry a Question or two in the Common-Council) to the greatest Enemy of their Power, even your late and much injured *R—p—f—t—t—*, against the Petition of some of the *Barbers*, though spirited up by *Aldermen* and their Agents—and sure they have in every Thing, a few perhaps excepted, kept up the *Form*, if not the reality, of Law and Justice.

BUT what need is there to apply to them, if the Remedy lies in your own Hands? If you are so united as to be strongest, you may surely have a *Law* passed to restore to the Community their Right of Electing their own Representatives.—It is, however, and in every Case, your Duty to propose and to support *such* a *Law*: It will be a proper Point to try your Strength on; it will awaken the Minds of your Opposites; any shew of Spirit may drive them into desperate Measures, make your Masters peremptorily refuse to put a Question—and put you under the *happy Necessity* of appealing to the Courts of *Law* for Justice.

I call this a *happy Necessity*, because it is the *only Thing* from which all good Citizens can expect Redress: It is *Necessity alone* which can force the Majority of the Well-wishers of Liberty to contribute to the Expence which must attend the

the Tryal of all your Rights and Privileges ; and I take it for granted that *this Question*, about the Manner of returning of the Common Council, would draw after it the *main Question* about the *Election of Aldermen*, and a Tryal of that Question was the only Favour that was asked—and which it seems by Law lay solely at the *Discretion* of the C——t to grant or to refuse.

But this is not the *only Question* worthy your Attention, nothing which affects the Liberty of the Community ought to be esteemed trifling, and I leave to your Consideration whether *the breaking* of Laws, calculated to preserve you a free and independent People, can be called *trifling*, and whether it may not be proper to rescind *those* Laws which were carried last Quarter Day for the *Admission* of Gentlemen at the Recommendation of your Lord Mayor and Master, notwithstanding a standing *Rule* against it, and a REFUSAL OF A BALLOT, tho' moved for and seconded.

You were dispirited at your last Meeting ; dispirited because of the ill Treatment you had then met with ; discouraged at the *wondrous* Success of those who so openly and so barefacedly had *trampled* on your most valuable Privileges ; disheartened at the *Misrepresentations* made of your Conduct and Behaviour ; at the *Censure* of the Principles, and the Actions of your Fellow-Citizens. But tho' you may have suffered by the wicked Forgeries of your Enemies without Doors, or the Testimony of such among you, who are watching your Motions, who are ingenious enough to *know* your Thoughts by the *meer Motion of your Lips*, or so attentive as to distinguish the *Voice of Particulars* in the confused Cries of hundreds ; be not however dismayed, *Time* will bring *Truth* to Light, and *Perseverance* and *Virtue* will at last get the better of FACTION and WICKEDNESS.

I am, Gentlemen,

DUBLIN, April, 18,
1750.

Your Friend and

Well-Wisher,

A MERCHANT

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